

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Currently, claims 1-17 are pending in this application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103:

Claims 1-8, 10-14 and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Ludwig et al (U.S. '539, hereinafter "Ludwig"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

For a reference to anticipate a claim, each element must be found, either expressly or under principles of inherency, in the reference. Applicant submits that Ludwig fails to disclose each element of the claimed invention. In particular, Ludwig fails to disclose a conference bridge having a multichannel connection to each of a plurality of terminal equipments, as required by independent claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 16 and 17. This limitation requires that every one of the plurality of terminal equipments in a teleconferencing system receives a multichannel connection. Independent claims 1, 10 and 16-17 further require that each of the channels in such a teleconferencing system is separately processed by each of the terminal equipments.

Page 3, lines 1-5 of the Office Action apparently alleges that Fig. 9 and col. 13, lines 1-6 discloses the above claimed features. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Signals 38-1, 38a-2 etc. discussed in this portion of Ludwig are each individually mixed single channel signals. Several channels are transmitted, but each terminal only receives one of them.

Ludwig is similar to admitted prior art Fig. 1 of the present application in many respects. In particular, admitted prior art Fig. 1 of the present application discloses a teleconferencing system in which there is a single monophonic signal providing a summation of all of the channels input to an exchange bridge equipment 100. Exchange bridge equipment 100 includes a combiner 120 which generates a combined signal. The combined signal is transmitted to each of the terminal equipments (i.e., a “broadcast summed signal” as explicitly noted in Fig. 1 is transmitted to each terminal equipment). While all of the channels are input to combiner 120 of exchange bridge equipment 100, a single monophonic signal is transmitted to each of the terminal equipments. In contrast, the present invention requires a multichannel connection to each of a plurality of terminal equipments.

The Office Action appears to allege that the outputs shown in Figs. 14 and 15 of Ludwig, which consist of a mix of channels, forms a multichannel signal. This allegation is incorrect. The system shown in Ludwig in fact discloses that no terminal equipment receives more than one channel from any given source. There is thus no multichannel connection made between any of the plurality of terminal equipments. Nor is there any mechanism for separately processing each of the received channels to provide a plurality of outputs. This must necessarily be the case since the terminal equipments disclosed in Ludwig only receive a single channel from any given source. There are therefore no separate channels to separately process in Ludwig. What each terminal receives is a single mixed channel representing all of the other terminal equipments.

The Office Action's interpretation of a "multichannel" as being a single audio output comprising a mix of several channels (as disclosed by Ludwig) is not consistent with Applicant's specification. For example, Fig. 2 of the application clearly shows that concentrator 230 feeds a multichannel audio link to the customer equipment. In particular, Fig. 2 illustrates a "N" channel decoder 14 in customer equipment of Fig. 2, which would only have a function if there were more than one channel to decode in order to generate a spatialized signal. A single channel mixed signal (as in Ludwig) would have nothing for the decoder 14 to operate.

Although mixing may take place in the concentrator 230 (in Fig. 2 of the present invention), more than one audio channel is nevertheless transmitted to the customer equipment 10. There is no disclosure of such an arrangement in Ludwig, where no more than one (mixed) signal is transmitted from any one participant to any other individual participant.

The Office Action further suggests that the plurality of A/V switches 30 at the individual user locations described by Ludwig separately process each received channel to provide a plurality of outputs. However, in Ludwig, there is only one channel (containing a mixed signal of a number of participants) transmitted between any two sites. As admitted by the Office Action, the local output of each participant in Ludwig is all participants, minus the local participant channel. This is all carried on a single channel. Each terminal equipment provides a single output representing all of the other

terminal equipments. In contrast, the claims require each terminal equipment provides a plurality of outputs, each output representing one of the other terminal equipments.

With respect to independent claims 3 and 12, Ludwig further fails to teach or suggest a conference bridge identifying currently active input channels and transmitting only those active channels over a multichannel connection together with control information identifying the transmitted channels. As discussed above, Ludwig fails to disclose a multichannel connection as claimed.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1-8, 10-14 and 16-17 are not anticipated by Ludwig and respectfully requests that the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §102 be withdrawn.

Claims 9 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Ludwig. Since claims 9 and 15 depend at least indirectly from claims 1 and 10, respectively, Applicant submits that these claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claims 1 and 10. Ludwig fails to disclose all of the limitations of claims 1 and 10 and thus all of the limitations of claims 9 and 15.

HUGHES

Application No. 09/623,977


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Conclusion:

Applicant believes that this entire application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice to this effect. If the Examiner has any questions or believes that an interview would further prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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